



Newsletter



April 2022

It is with great sadness; I have to inform members that Kath Barker passed away last week in the Sussex County Hospital. Kath had been a member of the Brighton Embroidery Group, and the Embroiderers Guild for almost 40 years, following her move to Brighton. Kath was a committee member for many years, acting as secretary and producing the yearly programme.

Stitching and Textiles were Kath's passion. In later years Kath chose to only attend the afternoon meetings, but you only had to suggest someone would pick her up and she was eager to attend, even when she was well into her 90's. Kath didn't let a broken arm or loss of dexterity stop her, Kath's passion was embroidery.

Kath requested that Brighton Embroidery Group should collect all her textile items and books to be used by us or included in our **Sale on 7th May 2022, 1 to 4pm, upstairs at Patcham Community Centre**, A poster will be emailed, please forward it on to your friends or family so that it can be widely advertised. Any assistance by BEG members, (and cakes, biscuits etc) on the 7th will be much appreciated with the sale, pricing, catering will be much appreciated. Plus there will be lots of bargains to add to your stash! We will all be thinking of Kath.

Below is a message from Kath's daughter.

I am sure you will be sad to hear that my mother, Kathleen Barker, died on Sunday 3rd April in the Royal Sussex County Hospital at the grand old age of 95. She was suffering from dementia for the last six months but was only ill for a few days before she died. She was a woman of many interests and talents. She came from a working-class family and was a true cockney being born within the sound of Bow Bells. She had a rudimentary education at a 'Central school', round the corner from the Imperial War Museum at the Elephant and Castle until she was evacuated to Luton at the age of 14, charged with the care of her 8-year, old brother. Though from humble beginnings she felt she had to try and make the world a better place. As a teenager during the war she turned her energies to fighting against fascism and for socialism – a fight she never abandoned. Through her political activism she met my father and his student comrades from Cambridge University. She mixed with some of the significant intellectuals of the mid twentieth century and learned from them – reading, reading, reading to better understand what they were discussing. A group of them, including Kath, bought an old army truck and drove across war-torn Europe in 1948 to help in the construction of a dam in Bulgaria. She wrote an account of these adventures which were so important to her and for which she was made a "heroine of Bulgaria"!

Her personal life was not without struggles: her marriage was a difficult one and eventually ended in divorce. My younger sister was born profoundly deaf but with Kath's determination she went to the only grammar school in England that took deaf girls and Judy did become independent and leave home to work in London. Sadly, quite soon after leaving home Judy was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and so began Kath's role as carer – and even spokeswoman for carers. She gave evidence to the Parliamentary Committee looking at Caring in the Community and met with 2 Ministers of Health and Princess Anne.

She did not let her caring role take over, however. She went to night school and gained O and A levels and then retrained as a teacher and achieved a degree in Environmental Studies (a rare and obscure subject in those days) at 50 years of age. There followed a 10-year teaching career.

So, what of retirement? She took completely new tacks joining organisations and being a 'secretary' to them all: British Bulgarian Friendship Society, ramblers, and machine embroiderers. Her embroidery brought her such pleasure: the chance to develop her creativity, work with her hands,

learn new techniques and the company of new friends. My husband built 2 workrooms in the loft and she needed the big one because there were always so many embroidery projects on the go! There are many lovely books about textiles and she wanted the Embroiderers to have first pick. It seems like there are enough materials, notions and embroiderers tools (etc) here to start a *passamaneria*. She wants the Group to have first pick of these too

I am sure she would be delighted if she thought you would raise a glass of something nice in her memory. If you would like to make a tangible memorial then a donation to the Multiple Sclerosis Society in her name would be kind.

Ruth Barker

Brighton Embroidery Group will once again be displaying at the annual Brighton and Hove Arts Council Exhibition. So far Judy only has her own work and some from Rosealie. It would be lovely if more members could display their own work, similar to our successful 'Make an Exhibition of Yourselves' meeting earlier in the year. You don't have to sell but it is a good advertisement for the Brighton Embroidery Group. If you would like to exhibit a piece of your work, please contact Judy Alexander for forms and details.

Judy needs to know the number that are going in as they need to be delivered to her on the 27th of April after 4.30pm. The exhibition is once again at the Friends centre in Brighton.

Warm regards Judy

Judy Alexander Judyalexander47@aol.com

We are pleased to announce that our annual Art Show has returned to its regular time in April. It will be at The Friends' Meeting House in Ship Street, Brighton Lanes, from the 27th to the 30th April open daily from 10am to 5pm.

We would like to invite all members of your Group to come along and see over 100 works of art produced by our Art Group members.

Entry is free.

Visitors to the Show you will be asked to vote for the art work they consider is the best in the show. The winner of this competition will be announced before the show ends on the Saturday afternoon.

I hope you will be able to visit.

Jane Osler

Chair

Brighton & Hove Arts Council

Remember

The May the 7th meeting will now be an afternoon sale of everything stitch related.